A MARSHALL CAVENDISH PUBLICATION 52 IN FORTNIGHTLY PARTS

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The Ancestral Trail

CYBER CHALLENGE IN THE NEXT DIMENSION

52 The Evil One,

Final battle with the king of Cyber World

Julek Heller

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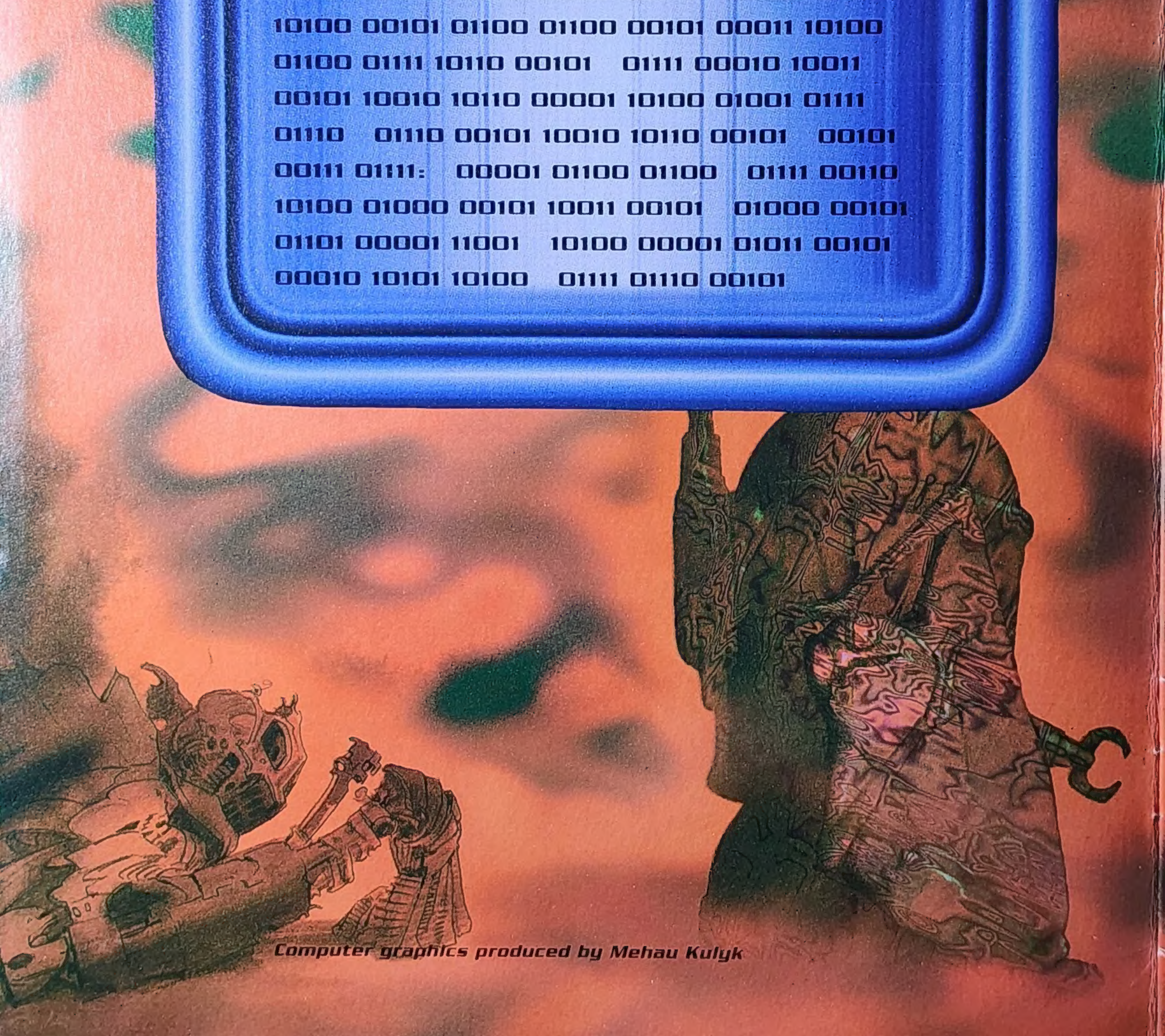


Computer graphics produced by Mehau Kulyk

Lines of worry creased Richard's forehead as he quietly studied the ominous dark shadow which stretched slowly across the floor. There was no doubt at all in his mind as to the owner of the shadow. "Robo," he whispered fearfully, "Is that who I think it is?"

"Do not understand question," said his robotic friend.

"What do your sensors say?"

Robo scanned the room before answering. "Newcomer is…"

Unseen power

Before Richard's companion could finish speaking, a savage and terrifying voice cut short his reply.

"Silence!" it commanded. The solitary word was followed by a bright burst of red light that seemed to come from nowhere.

Immediately, Robo and Teeza were enveloped in the light.

The acrid smell of ozone filled the air as Richard turned to regard his friends. He was shocked by what he saw. The pair were standing completely still. No motion came from them at all. It was as if they had been turned to stone.

Without warning, Richard felt something cold and clammy touch his leg. Looking down to the ground, he was amazed to see that the floor was alive with movement. Before Richard had time to react, his arms and legs were roughly seized.

With every part of his body held in a vice-like grip by the terrifying collection of claws, hands and tendrils that was bursting from the ground, Richard found it difficult even to breathe. In the midst of his panic, he could hear the same vile voice as before.

"Take that *thing* to my power centre," it ordered.

ENSNARED

Richard was carried through a series of dark, winding tunnels to a large chamber that was illuminated by sombre red light. All at once, he felt the creatures' grip on him loosen and he was free. As Richard picked himself up, his captors retreated back into the ground from which they had sprung.

Richard looked warily around him. Apart from two strange features, the room in which he was standing was empty. To his right stood a tall column that was lined with rows of

flickering lights. To his his left was a strange-looking circular machine. Richard could not even begin to guess what its function might be.

Suddenly, Richard heard the sound of footsteps coming towards him. From the shadows stepped an awesome form.

"The Evil One!" Richard gasped.

"Into the Extractor," ordered the figure.

Instantly, Richard felt an invisible force surround him. There was nothing he could do as he was propelled into the sinister circular machine.

"So, we meet at last," said the frightening apparition as Richard's hands were bound by the unseen forces and electrical wires were attached to his body.

"What do you want from me?" Richard asked, fighting back his fear.

"You will soon find out," gloated the Evil One.

There was an ominous humming sound, which was followed by the cackle of static electricity. The strange machine Richard was strapped into had been switched on.

"What's happening?" he yelled.

The Evil One cleared his throat. "I have been watching you since your arrival in my world," he said. "You have amused me."

As Richard listened, he began to feel weak and faint.

"You have been a fool," his captor continued. "Did you really believe that you could best me?"

"I've handled everything you've thrown at me so far," Richard said bravely.

"Not so – you have only been granted the privilege of meeting me in person because I have allowed you to," came the reply. "Every creature you have encountered in the Cyber Dimension has in reality been destroyed by me!"

"The accursed Golan brought you into my world believing that you might defeat me," the Evil One continued. "He was badly misinformed."

"What are you saying?" Richard asked, growing ever weaker.

"I will tell you before you are vanquished forever," said the Evil One. "Every creature you have met since your arrival here has been controlled by me. Through my robot spy – who you know as Robo – you were able to evaluate their weaknesses and destroy them. This was done so that I might study your reactions in times of danger and fear."

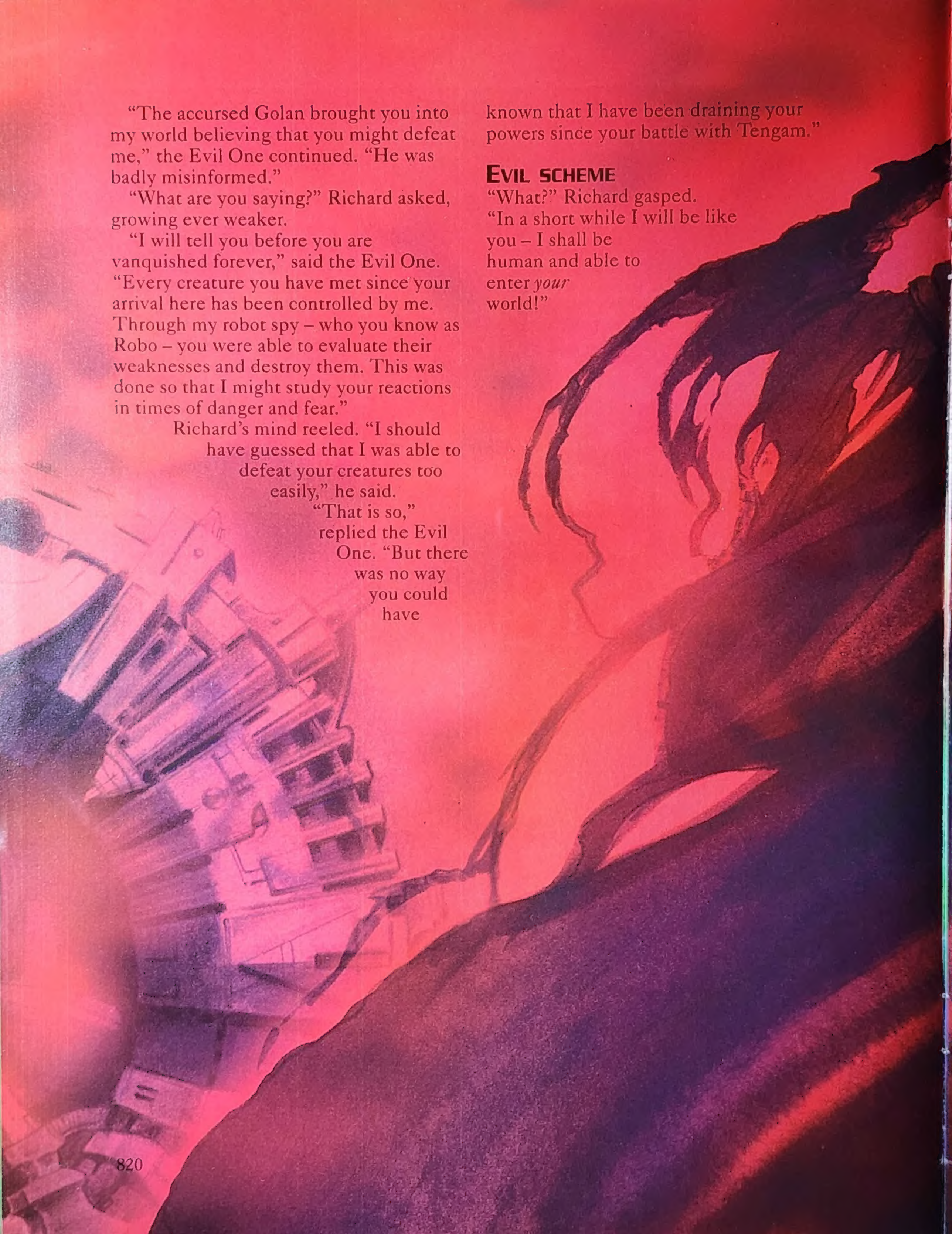
Richard's mind reeled. "I should have guessed that I was able to defeat your creatures too easily," he said.

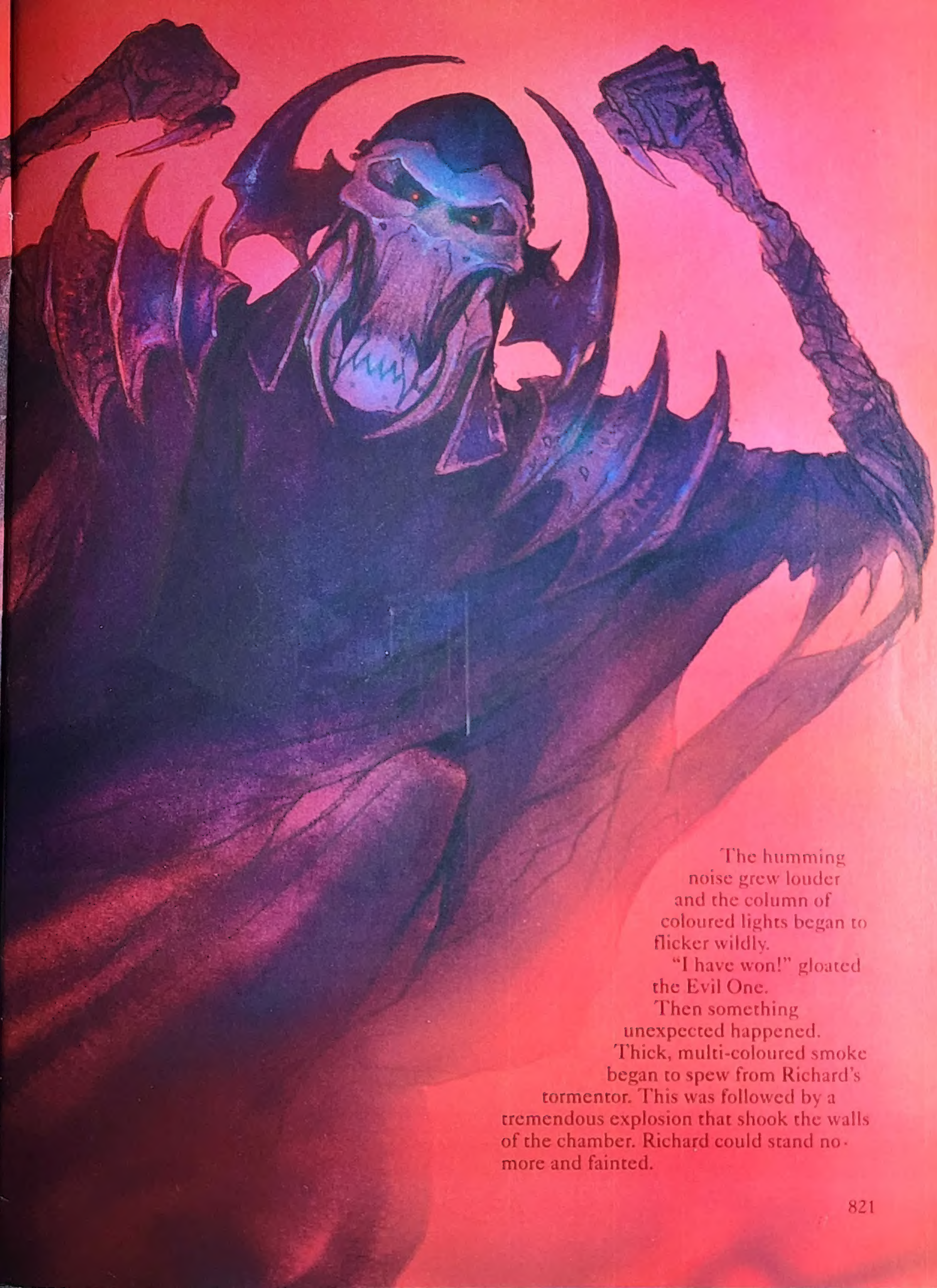
"That is so," replied the Evil One. "But there was no way you could have known that I have been draining your powers since your battle with Tengam."

EVIL SCHEME

"What?" Richard gasped.

"In a short while I will be like you – I shall be human and able to enter *your* world!"





The humming noise grew louder and the column of coloured lights began to flicker wildly.

"I have won!" gloated the Evil One.

Then something unexpected happened.

Thick, multi-coloured smoke began to spew from Richard's tormentor. This was followed by a tremendous explosion that shook the walls of the chamber. Richard could stand no more and fainted.

"Wake up!" Richard opened his weary eyes to see the figures of Robo and Teeza standing over him. He had no idea how long he had been unconscious.

"You're alive!" Richard exclaimed, a tired smile coming to his lips. "But where is the Evil One?"

"He is defeated," said Robo. "His reign of terror is over."

Richard screwed his face up in confusion. "How was he destroyed?" he asked incredulously.

"Look to my binary panel," said the robot.

Message

For the last time, Richard scanned the rows of binary digits. When he had decoded them he finally understood.

"The Evil One told me that he wanted my human attributes so he could become like me," Richard said.

"Using the Extractor, he endeavoured to absorb Chosen One's human attributes," Robo went on to explain. "He was able to accept all but one."

"Love," Richard said, "the one human characteristic that someone as evil as he could not take."

"Hurray! Nicecool!" Teeza cheered happily.

Richard looked over at Robo. "Before he was defeated, the Evil One said some strange things," he remembered. "He told me that he had been draining my powers since I arrived in the Cyber Dimension."

"Affirmative," Robo agreed. "Every time you encountered a new enemy, the Evil One was able to steal away part of your energy with Extractor panels."

"Extractor panels?"

"They were invisible to you," explained the robot. "Only I was able to view them."

Richard scratched his head. "What did they look like?"

"You were finally able to see them earlier when Evil One placed you in the Extractor."

"You mean the strange looking panels with all those coloured dots?"

"Affirmative," was the deadpan response.

"I have to admit I'm a little disappointed," Richard said glumly.

"Do not understand," Robo replied.

"It's just that I thought we were doing so well," Richard continued.

HIDDEN MEANING

"Now I discover that the only reason we were able to defeat all the monsters we have come up against is because the Evil One wanted us to do so."

Robo's internal circuits buzzed. "That is not completely true," he said.

"Oh?" Richard replied.

"Real reason for your triumph is contained in the Evil One's own name!"

Richard was about to query this odd statement when he had a sudden flash of inspiration.

"The Evil One!" he exclaimed. "If you jumble up the letters in his name it spells 'love in thee'."

"Affirmative," Robo explained. "Possession of human characteristic known as love means that Chosen One can never be defeated by Evil One."

Richard shook his head in astonishment. "If only we had known that before, we could have saved ourselves a lot of worry."

"The time for talk is over now," Robo announced. "There is much to be done – you must return home. We are now close enough to the gateway to your world for sensors to indicate exact position."

Richard and Teeza followed as Robo led them through a labyrinth of dark tunnels. Finally, they came to a vast cavern. In the middle stood a pedestal made of stone.

"This is where you must place Omni pieces," the robot explained.

"What should I do? I can't touch them, remember," Richard replied

"This task is not for you," explained the robot. "There is only one who knows the secrets of the Omni pieces."

"Who is that?" Richard asked.

"Me – goodvibe!" said the little wigmat.

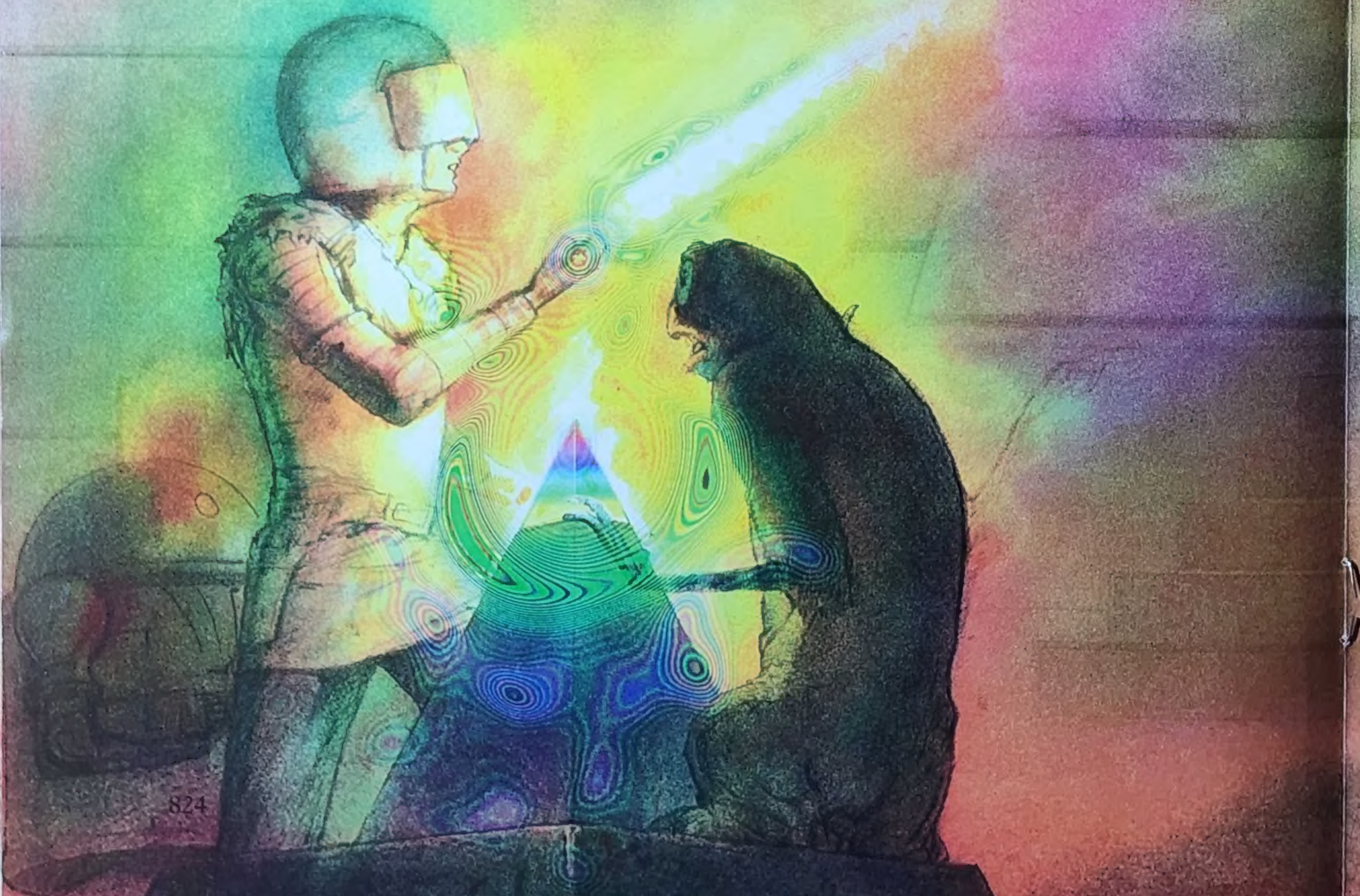
"It is no accident that the wigmat was chosen as your companion." Robo's front panel slid open and four Omni pieces dropped to the floor. Teeza picked them up and brought out the three Omni pieces he had been carrying.

THE PUZZLE SOLVED

One by one, the wigmat assembled the pieces. First, he carefully laid the square Omni piece on the smooth stone surface of the plinth. Then he inserted the circle and star into the square base. Finally, he placed one triangle along each edge of the square to form a pyramid shape.

Teeza rubbed his hands together. "Finished," he announced cheerfully.

"Now Chosen One must place sword over Omni pieces, with blade pointed upwards," the robot instructed. Richard drew his sword and held it in position.



Immediately, a stream of dazzling light burst from the assembled Omni pieces and shot through the sword. Richard's eyes followed the direction of the light. He was amazed by what he saw. "A doorway!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"It is time for you to say goodbye," Robo said gently.

At that moment, the ground began to shake and rumble. "What now?" Richard cried out in exasperation.

"Vile boy," roared a voice that Richard recognized instantly.

"The Evil One!" he gasped. "I thought he was defeated!"

Robo's sensors hummed into action. "Do not understand," was all he could say.

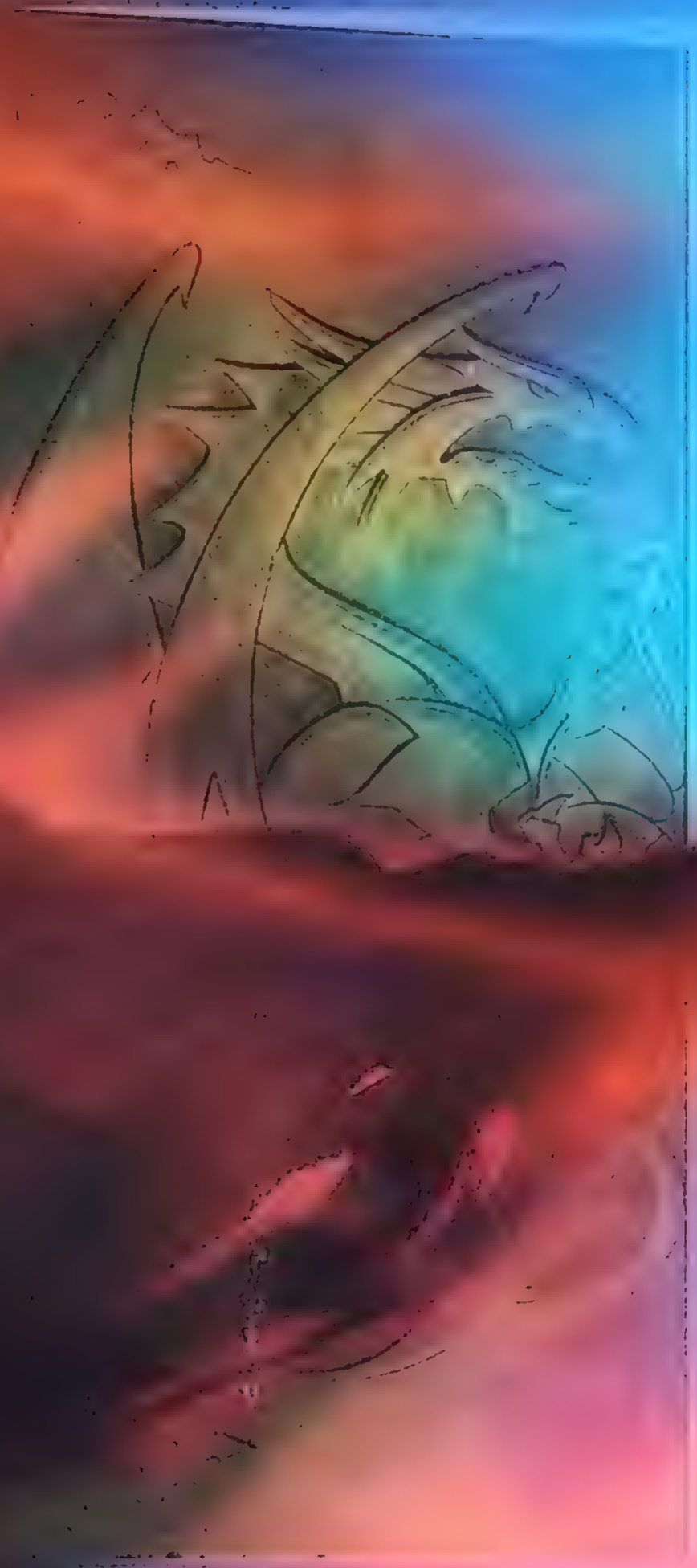
The awesome figure of the Evil One appeared at the entrance of the cavern. He was very angry. "Of course you do not understand!" he screamed in fury.

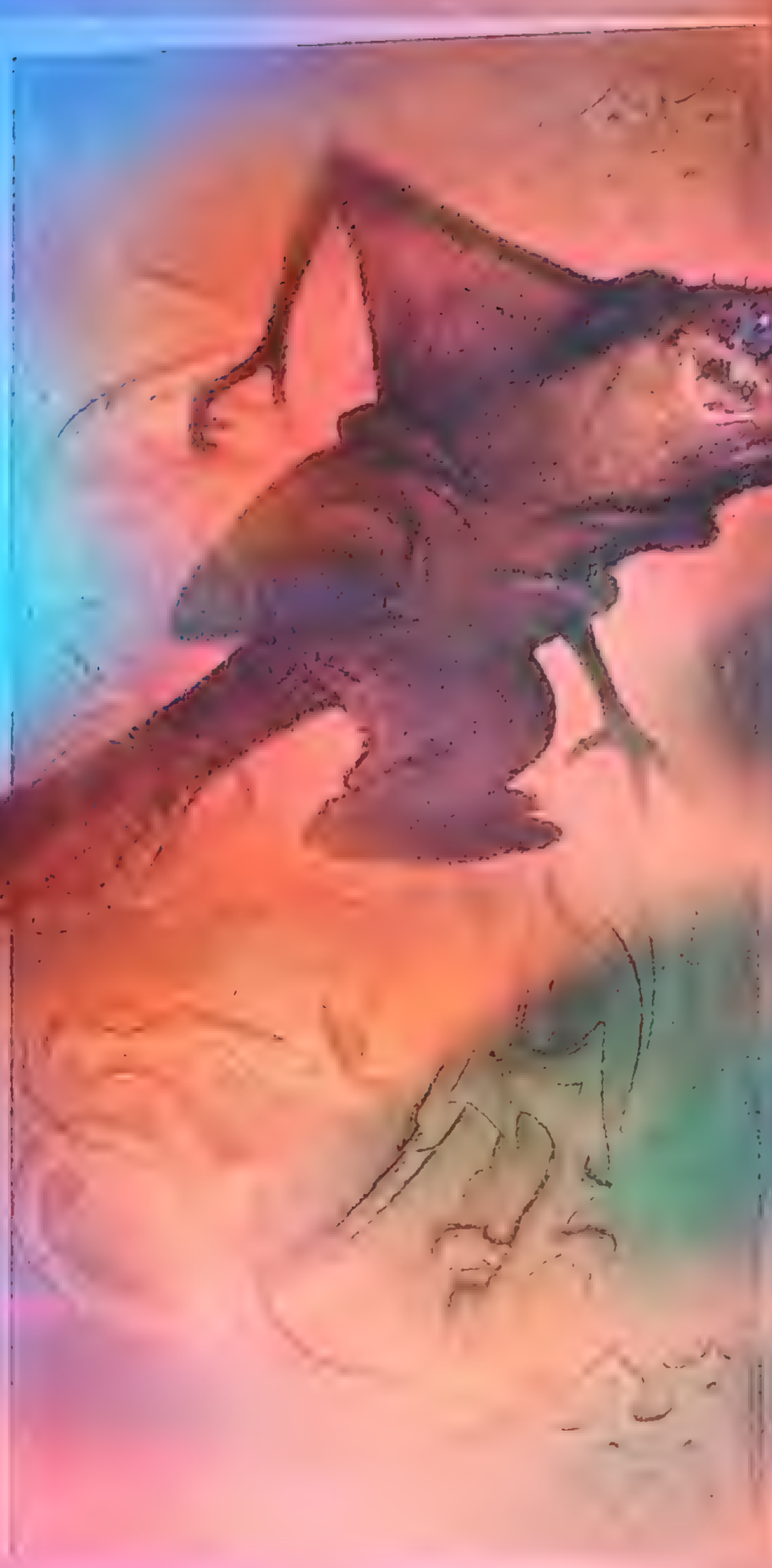
The three companions trembled. "Run!" shouted Richard.

TRAPPED

The Evil One began to laugh. "You cannot escape from me," he scoffed. "You may have thwarted my plans but you will pay dearly for your meddling!"

With a yell of anger he scooped up the tiny form of Teeza in his claw-like hands. "This *thing* will be first to die!" he cried.





Richard looked at his terrified friend and felt a wave of anger surge through his body. "Leave him alone!" he demanded.

The Evil One paused and stared deep into Richard's eyes. "Your end will be slow and painful," he promised.

Brave deed

Richard stood his ground and returned the Evil One's stare. Raising his sword, he grasped the hilt with both hands and held the long shining blade high over his head. Slowly he advanced, until he was within striking distance of his horrifying opponent. "Put that toy away!" jeered the Evil One. "It will do you no good!"

Richard watched in fear as smoke began to issue from the shadowy form of the Evil One. Then bolts of lightning started to rain down on the hapless friends.

"No one can challenge my power!" the Evil One screamed maniacally.

Suddenly, one of the forks of lightning struck Robo. Showers of sparks streamed through the air as the little robot's body frantically shook. "Do not worry about me," advised Robo. "Save Teeza!"

Richard turned to face the Evil One. "Put the wigmat down!" he said with an assurance that surprised even himself.

"So," said his tormentor, "the Chosen One has spirit!"

Richard swung his sword with all the force he could muster. A jet of flame belched forth as the blade sank into the Evil One's flesh. For a moment there was an eerie silence. Then a terrible scream came from the Evil One. The blood-curdling sound echoed around the walls of the cavern. "What have you done!" the Evil One shrieked. "This cannot be happening to me!"

Dark destruction

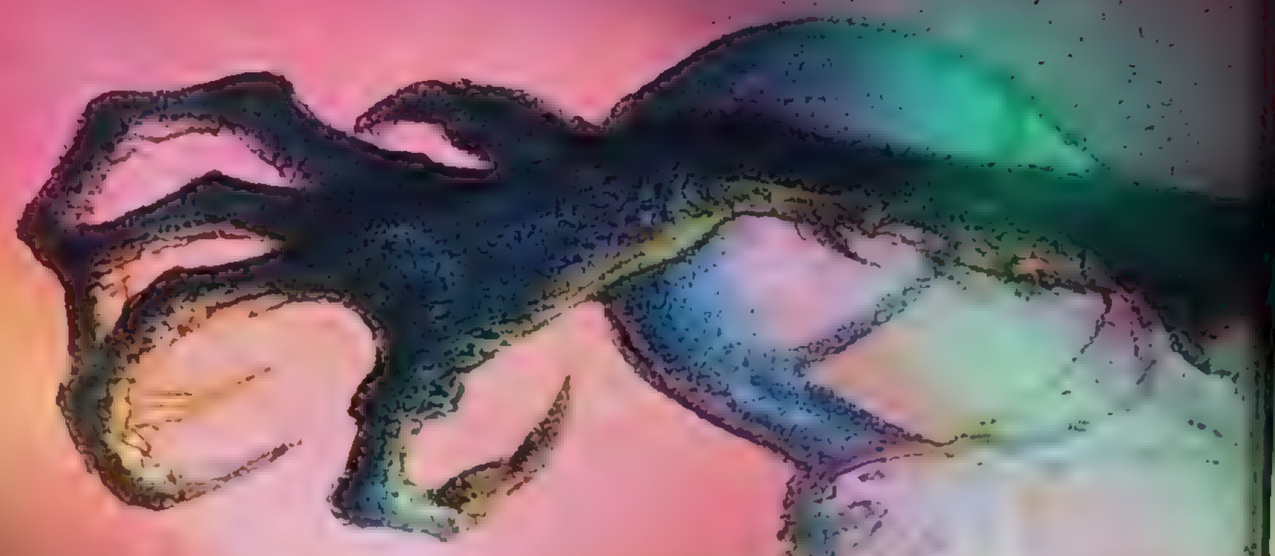
Richard looked on in amazement as the Evil One began to disintegrate. Cracks appeared in his fearsome mask. It fell to the floor and crumbled into dust.

"Noooooo! It's not possible!" the evil being cried as flames appeared and began to consume his body. A vortex of air swept around him, spinning fragments of his decaying torso into the air.

"Tell me what's happening, Robo," Richard begged.

"Your sword has destroyed Evil One," answered his companion. A note of amazement had entered his flat robotic tones. "According to memory banks this is not possible. Chosen One's sword is not powerful enough."

Robo's sensors hummed as he worked on the problem. "Have arrived at solution," he finally announced. "Evil One succeeded all too well in attempt to take on human attributes. He became mortal and so could be killed like any human."



Richard turned his attention back to the glittering doorway with unease. "Chosen One must hurry," warned Robo. "Way to your world will close soon."

Richard took a deep breath and walked resolutely towards the opening. At the last moment, he turned and raised his hand in a gesture of farewell. "Goodbye, my friends," he said sadly. "I'll miss you both."

As Richard stepped through the opening he turned for one last time and caught a glimpse of Teeza. Tears were cascading down the little wigmat's furry cheeks.

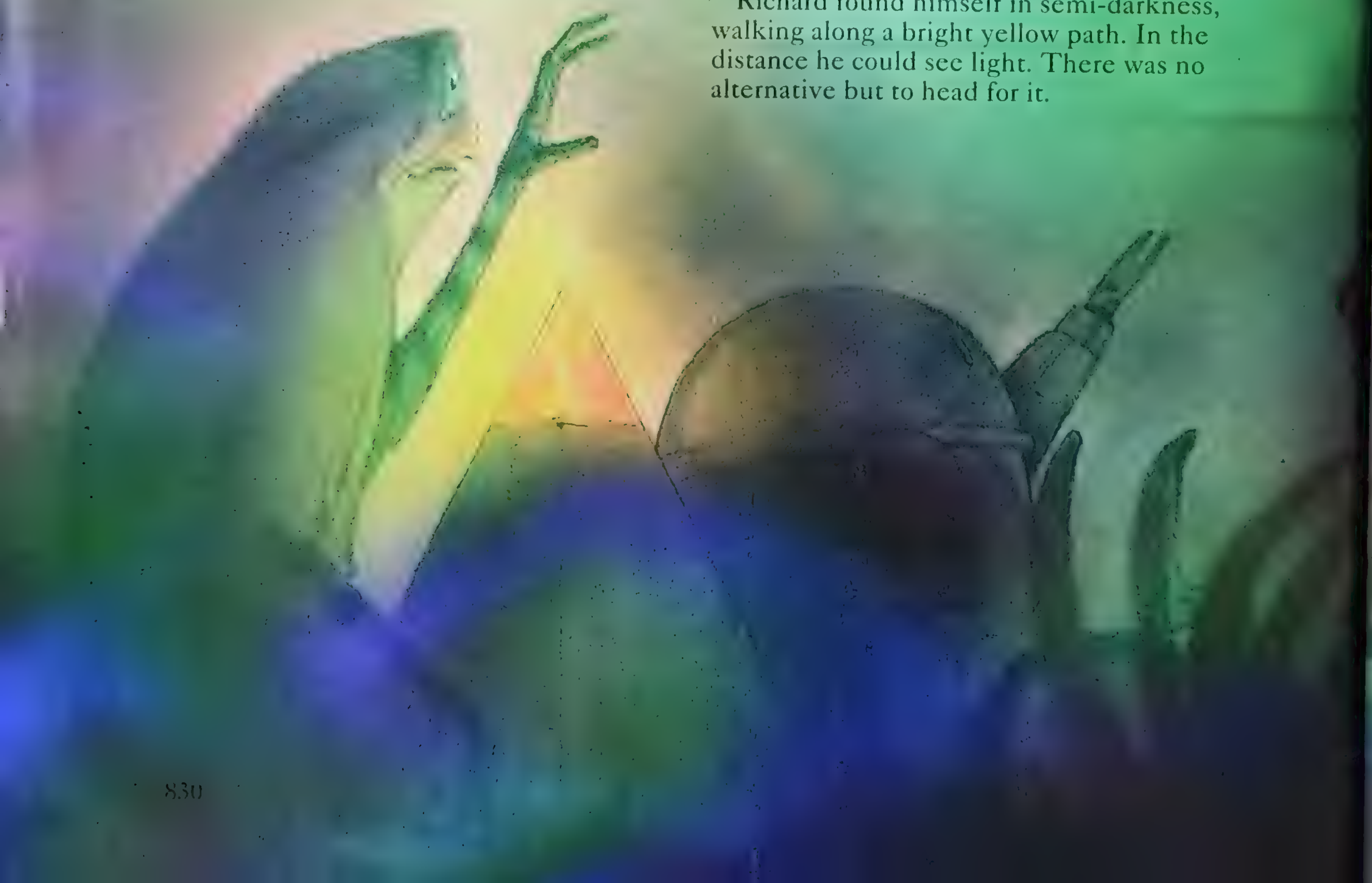
Suddenly, Richard felt a great surge of energy propelling him forwards and downwards. He found himself in a tunnel. Its walls were shining with the brightest light he had ever seen.

He lost all sense of direction as he began to tumble in slow-motion through the soundless void. The sensation was even more unpleasant than travelling through a worm hole.

FALLING

Ghostly images from the Ancestral World and Cyber Dimension floated past Richard as he journeyed onwards. Strange sounds and smells overpowered his senses. Just when he was beginning to feel he could stand it no more, his strange voyage came to an end.

Richard found himself in semi-darkness, walking along a bright yellow path. In the distance he could see light. There was no alternative but to head for it.



All of a sudden, Richard was in familiar territory. He could hear birds singing and smell freshly cut grass. He looked around him and heaved a sigh of relief. He was no longer in the Cyber Dimension or the Ancestral World. He was back on the common where all his adventures had begun.

Richard's clothing had also changed. His body armour, sword and helmet had vanished. He now wore his normal clothes again. In the distance he could see the lights of his home town.

"Have I been dreaming?" he asked himself.

It was then that he noticed a sparkling object hanging around his neck. Picking it up, he held it in the palm of his hand and studied it for a few moments.

"The amulet!" he said in surprise.

Slowly, Richard made his way home.

SHOOMI'S SANCTUARY

Enter into the Cyber Dimension and engage optical recognition to find...

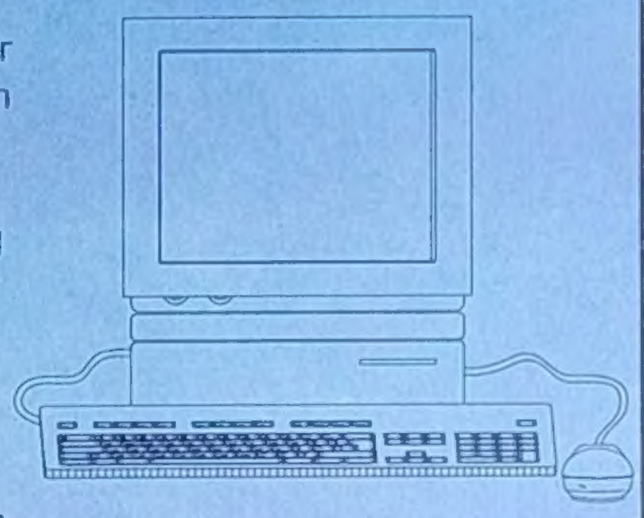
▶ Shoomi and Shoobi

Shoomi and Shoobi are still keeping close behind Richard as his adventures come to an end. Can you spot them in under three minutes? The answer is printed lower down on this page.

In issue 51 Shoomi and Shoobi were hidden at the foot of the opening page.

▶ Computer Challenge

In the last issue a complete computer system was hidden on page 805. This included the CPU (Central Processing Unit), the monitor, keyboard and mouse. There is no computer component hidden in this issue.



▶ Competition Details

Included with this issue are the final letter blocks. You have now collected all 26 letters. Cut them out and use them to enter our super competition. You will find the competition entry form attached to this issue.

▶ Techscan cards

Issue 52 includes corrected versions of the Techscan Q & A cards featuring Lasers and Acid & Alkali. Unfortunately, these was printed incorrectly in issue 28. Discard the original cards and use the new versions in their place. We apologize for any inconvenience that this error may have caused. You now have all the cards you need to play *Techscan Pursuit*. The rules are in the *Ancestral Trail* games booklet.

▶ Index

There is an index of all 52 of Richard's adventures in the Ancestral World and the Cyber Dimension on the back cover of this issue.

Shoomi and Shoobi are on page 832.

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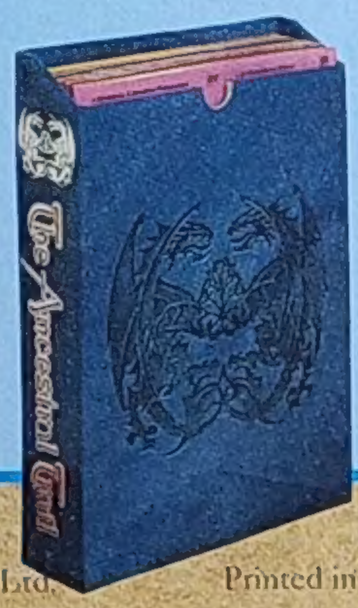

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